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March 8, 2013

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JE Fielding*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **ADDITIONAL LINKED CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS FOUND THROUGH
GENOTYPE TESTING**

This is to inform you that the Department of Public Health (DPH) has learned of additional cases of tuberculosis (TB) linked by a common genotype. These cases have been identified in the Koreatown area. These are not linked to the genotype associated with the homeless TB outbreak.

Background

In Los Angeles County, TB investigations now routinely include genotyping (DNA testing) of specimens from identified TB cases sent to the State Public Health Laboratory. In addition to genotyping newly identified cases, the State Laboratory is also performing testing on older specimens that are available to identify any linkages. These tests may assist DPH in effectively identifying all contacts at risk for this disease.

New Findings of Linked Cases

As part of the ongoing analysis of older and newly identified TB cases, the State Laboratory has found a linkage of six TB cases among individuals of Korean descent in the Koreatown area of Los Angeles County. As previously mentioned, these cases are not related to the homeless TB outbreak. This linkage is among three related cases treated between 2009 and 2011 and three new cases currently under treatment by DPH. All six cases share the same "multiple drug resistant" (MDR) form of TB. Although this is a form of TB that is resistant to some of the commonly-used drugs, it is important to emphasize that this is a treatable disease and that DPH routinely and effectively treats such cases in the DPH clinics.

Response Activities

DPH is currently conducting contact investigations on the three latest cases in treatment. DPH Community Health Services staff are coordinating the follow-up for this group of TB patients in collaboration with DPH TB Control and the State TB Branch. DPH will also be working with the local provider community that serves this population to assure that any new symptomatic patients are rapidly

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reported and receive treatment. We are currently in the process of translating the most recent TB information sheet into the Korean language. Once completed, DPH will distribute and post the information sheet on the DPH website.

If you have any questions or would like further information please let me know.

JEF:dd

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors